

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

**Minutes  
July 18, 2007**

**Attending:**

**RMAC:**

**Representing**

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association
Mike Connor	Public Member
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation
J.R McCollister	Public Member
Ed Anchordoguy	California Wool Growers Association
Chuck Pritchard	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association
Leonard Hale	Watershed Fire Council of Southern California
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association
Jeff Stephens	CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

**Members of the Public:**

Tracy Schohr	California Cattlemen's Association
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**Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:**

Ken Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M. Introductions of all present were made.

**Item 8 Focus Group Reports:**

Rangeland Focus Group, Mike Connor Reporting: Mike Connor reported that the Rangeland Focus Group met the previous day with discussion focused primarily on issues related to Certified Rangeland Managers (CRM). Mr. Connor distributed a draft letter to the Cal-Pac Society of Range Management (SRM) Certification Panel that calls for changes in the exam content for CRM certification as well as a more formal process for Continuing Education Units (CEU). RMAC as a whole agreed that the letter to the Panel should address the concerns expressed by RMAC at the Focus Group meeting. Clancy Dutra stated that the letter should specifically describe the who, what, when, and why for certification of CRMs. He also stated that the letter should address the following three items for CEU:

1. Record keeping.
2. What courses qualify for CEU and how to qualify a course.
3. Attendance accountability.

Edits were made to the letter and Ken Zimmerman instructed Mike Connor and Mel Thompson to craft a final version of the letter by close of RMAC's business today.

Mike Connor turned the discussion to the proposed Board Policy # 12 also discussed at the Focus Group meeting the previous day. Edits were completed to the latest draft. Ken Zimmerman asked that Mike Connor distribute another draft to RMAC within two weeks and that comments from RMAC members would be due back within a second two week period. All materials are to be circulated through Jeff Stephens. He also recommended that prior to circulating the proposed policy to the Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC) and the Board that it first be circulated to the Cal-Pac SRM Certification Panel, since the Board will likely be seeking agreement on content with this body prior to taking any action.

Mike Connor also mentioned the subject of Federal agencies using CRMs for rangeland practices. He stated his recommendation that any discussion/recommendations from RMAC be deferred until after the Cal-Pac SRM Certification Panel has been consulted regarding proposed Board policy # 12. Chuck Pritchard confirmed that the Panel will meet November 1-3, 2007.

### **Item 3, Review of the May 2007 Minutes:**

Revisions to the minutes were noted by Jeff Stephens. Chuck Pritchard made the motion to pass with revisions noted. Leonard Hale seconded. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

### **Item 4, Proposed Paper: Integrating Natural Resource Management in California with Resource Conservation Investments:**

Ken Zimmerman opened discussion by stating that he attended the Board meeting in McArthur and presented the paper to the Policy Committee. The paper was approved for distribution. Ken Zimmerman reported on some of the comments received by the Policy Committee as noted below:

The paper is not specific enough. Issues need to be better defined. Ken Zimmerman countered that RMAC's objective was to exercise brevity at this point and expand upon the issues with input from interested public.

More specifically the Policy Committee took exception with page one, second paragraph, last sentence stating that insufficient information exists in the paper to substantiate the statement. They also interpreted the statement to imply that RMAC does not support the activities as stated in this sentence which reads as follows:

*It is generally accepted by public and private land managers that the costs associated with planning, environmental compliance, and permit conditions are the most common obstacles preventing sustainable resource management and stewardship.*

Ken Zimmerman reported to the Policy Committee by stating that the text in question is not intended to reflect RMAC's position; rather it is a statement of what was reported to RMAC during the course of investigation.

During the McArthur Board meeting Ken Zimmerman visited Burney Falls State Park and reported on comments made by the Park Manager. The manager stated that State Parks

intends to acquire additional property regardless of whether funds are available for management. Mr. Zimmerman found these statements of great relevance to the RMAC paper. He informed the Policy Committee of parallel efforts with the Resources Agency. The Committee made it known that RMAC should stay informed of other activities that may duplicate RMAC's efforts.

Scott Carnegie asked if Ken Zimmerman wished to mention the reference made to Fire & Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) and its involvement with the paper. Mr. Zimmerman responded stating that when the Policy Committee made comment indicating that the paper needs to be expanded and better developed, that he informed the Committee of the original proposal which was to seek assistance from FRAP using their information and expertise. However, this support is not forthcoming. The Policy Committee then directed staff to contact FRAP and inquire if assistance can be arranged. The type of information cited by the Policy Committee which might be obtained from FRAP is as follows:

1. Acres acquired by the State
2. How many acquisitions have a management plan?
3. What is the current status for maintenance of these lands?
4. What was the purpose for the acquisition?

Tracy Schohr stated that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy can not acquire land without funds for management, even if the land is donated. They are the first Conservancy that has this requirement.

Ken Zimmerman stated that the next task is to determine the mailing list and then prepare the document for distribution. Tracy Schohr made specific recommendations from the California Rangeland Coalition membership.

Jeff Stephens will obtain a mailing list from the Board for selecting potential recipients and put out a draft mailing list based on input from Tracy Schohr and other RMAC members. Ed Anchordoguy volunteered to help screen the list.

Tracy Schohr recommended that the cover letter contain a return date for comments. RMAC agreed.

Ken Zimmerman asked Jeff Stephens to place the paper on the Board's website and the link supplied to the associations for their respective newsletter. Jeff Stephens stated he would contact the Executive Officer on the matter of posting.

#### **Item 8 Focus Group Reports (continued from previous discussion):**

Mike Connor distributed a new draft of the letter addressed to the Cal-Pac SRM Certification Panel regarding the CRM certification process and continuing education. He reviewed the edits made in response to RMAC input.

Chuck Pritchard made a motion to accept the new draft with revisions. J.R. McCollister seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Mike Connor asked that Jeff Stephens send the finished copy to him and then mail the letter.

Mike Connor suggested that RMAC revisit the issue of Caltrans cleaning equipment when moving from site to site at a later meeting.

**Item 5, Discussion: Problems Associated with Invasive Weed Control Common to other States. Opportunities to Interface with CDFA and the Forest Pest Council**

Item 5 was deferred to a later meeting of RMAC.

**Item 6, Ecological Reserves and Relationships with California Rangelands:**

Ken Zimmerman stated that this subject originates from conversations that he has had with managers of reserves that adjoin his ranch. Both areas do not have a management plan and both have ecological problems. One has approached Ken Zimmerman to reintroduce grazing to the reserve. Subsequently RMAC staff did make contact with Department of Fish & Game (DFG) Teresa LeBlanc that provided regulations that govern ecological reserves. These regulations contain language that permits grazing specific to each reserve.

This issue may be an opportunity for RMAC to provide support and information to DFG reserves that are interested in grazing.

**Item 7 Agency and Association Reports:**

California Cattlemen's Association (CCA), Tracy Schohr reporting: Tracy Schohr passed out a letter from the California Rangeland Coalition (CRC). Ms. Schohr stated that the CRC has met with Diane Feinstein's state Director on the land owner's incentive program and the stewardship grants. These are with the Interior Department's budget. The CRC also met with Speaker Pelosi seeking funding for the grassland preservation program and grassland reserves program. The Williamson Act is still not in the State budget. CRC did send a letter with 27 organizations in support of Williamson. Every nongovernmental organization signed the letter.

Tracy Schohr reminded RMAC of the addition of Justin Oldfield to CCA staff and his work on E. coli. He is also working on AB 32, Greenhouse Gas Emotions. Ken Zimmerman mentioned that there is a new person with the Agricultural Research Station (ARS); Mark Wertz in Reno. He is working on E. coli and recommended that CCA contact Mr. Wertz.

Tracy Schohr reported on the Wildlife Action Plan (WAP). It is an 800 page document. CCA and The Farm Bureau have submitted comments. There was legislation that proposed to make the WAP permanent; however, CCA and the Farm Bureau were successful in stopping the legislation. Ken Zimmerman noted that the language cited in the WAP on grazing is very unfriendly to the practice of grazing livestock. Tracy Schohr agreed stating that grazing aggravates the spread of invasive species and harms birdlife on grazing lands. In response to letters written by Audubon and others this language was removed. Leonard Hale asked for clarification on the circumstances present when grazing livestock may contribute to expansion of noxious plants. Chuck Pritchard and Tracy Schohr responded stating that seeds with a hard coat can make it through the cows gut and that this is how seeds are distributed when moving livestock.

Jeff Stephens asked on the status of the WAP. Tracy Schohr stated that it has been submitted to DFG as a finished product and that possession of a WAP directly impacts the State's ability to obtain funding for wildlife conservation projects. Ken Zimmerman noted that in consideration of the support demonstrated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and DFG for the CRC that the anti grazing language expressed in the WAP Executive Summary seems to be a contradiction of the support.

Chuck Pritchard noted that the lands within the Carrizo Plains National Monument do not support tulle elk or antelope. Both are found on private lands where grazing programs are creating superior forage. He maintained that the critiques of grazing do not have the expertise needed to properly manage rangelands.

Ken Zimmerman asked what the opportunity is for RMAC regarding the WAP. Should RMAC be doing a peer review on the content? Tracy Schohr responded that it is probably too late for comment; however, RMAC should stay current with any opportunity for updates and revisions.

Jeff Stephens confirmed with Tracy Schohr that a primary intent of the WAP is to secure funding. Tracy Schohr also stated that the Washington DC Based branch of Defenders of Wildlife has as their objective to have the WAP passed as legislation. To date this has not occurred. The most damaging evidence against adopting the WAP as law is that it does not contain the most current research on rangeland management. CCA and the Farm Bureau have successfully used this argument to prevent the WAP being codified as law.

#### **Item 8 Focus Group Reports (continued from previous discussion):**

Water Fire Focus Group: J.R. McCollister asked to relay information dealing with issues that may impact the Water Focus Group even though this group would not be making a report at today's meeting. He relayed an article that appeared in the Red Bluff and Chico papers. The Central Valley Regional Board is being sued on issues related to water quality monitoring. The issue is each individual ranch doing monitoring versus water monitoring coalitions doing the monitoring on behalf of multiple landowners.

Vegetation Management/Fire Focus Group, J.R. McCollister Reporting: Mr. McCollister continued with a report of his last meeting with the Board's Resource Protection Committee (RPC). The RPC did not discuss the State Fire Plan. However, they will devote three hours to the Fire Plan at the next meeting. He stated that one issue of concern to him is that it was announced at that meeting of the RPC that the Board and the Department may wish to change their direction and not do a review of all Vegetation Treatment Programs (VTP); rather they may evaluate just the Department's Vegetation Management Program (VMP). J.R. McCollister cited several tasks he believes that the Board could do to accomplish a complete review of the VTP. One is direct Department staff in Sacramento and the field to assist, or contract some of it out. The other option is to scale the project down.

Jeff Stephens was asked by Ken Zimmerman to obtain a copy of the RPC minutes. Jeff Stephens agreed.

Mel Thompson raised the question of whether the task of fuels management is such an enormous task that the will and/or practicality of doing so is not there. Ken Zimmerman cited the Burney example where the locals are trying to address their concerns and treat the high priority areas; rather than do nothing.

J.R. McCollister recommended that Board Member Giacomini be present at the next RMAC meeting. Ken Zimmerman agreed and stated that he would make contact and request that she attend the next RMAC meeting.

J.R. McCollister suggested that the State Fire Plan be modified to encourage larger landscape treatments. He stated that presently the Unit Chiefs are interpreting the Plan as one focused on the wildland urban interface almost exclusively. This attitude is reflected in recent accomplishment. Mr. McCollister stated that fuels management over larger areas is difficult such as the use of prescribed fire. However, it can be done provided it is a priority of the Director and Unit Chiefs.

Scott Carnegie noted that the lack of fuels management is in line with the major focus of the Department, which is fire suppression with far less emphasis on prevention (fuels management).

#### **Item 9 Status Report Vegetation Treatment Program Environmental Impact Report**

Jeff Stephens passed out a status sheet for the June Board meeting. The EIR is still an administrative format with various components completed and some sections of individual chapters still under construction. Additional funding has been sought to assist the contractor with completing missing portions of the administrative draft. An amendment to the contract will be completed to secure the funding. Prop 40 remains as the funding source. The Department prefers to circulate the administrative draft as a nearly complete document versus individual chapters.

#### **Item 8, New and Unfinished Business:**

Next RMAC meeting: J.R. McCollister would like to have a Focus Group meeting if Board Member Giacomini is able to attend. The next meeting will be September 18-19, 2007.

#### **Item 9, Public Comment:**

NONE

Adjourn